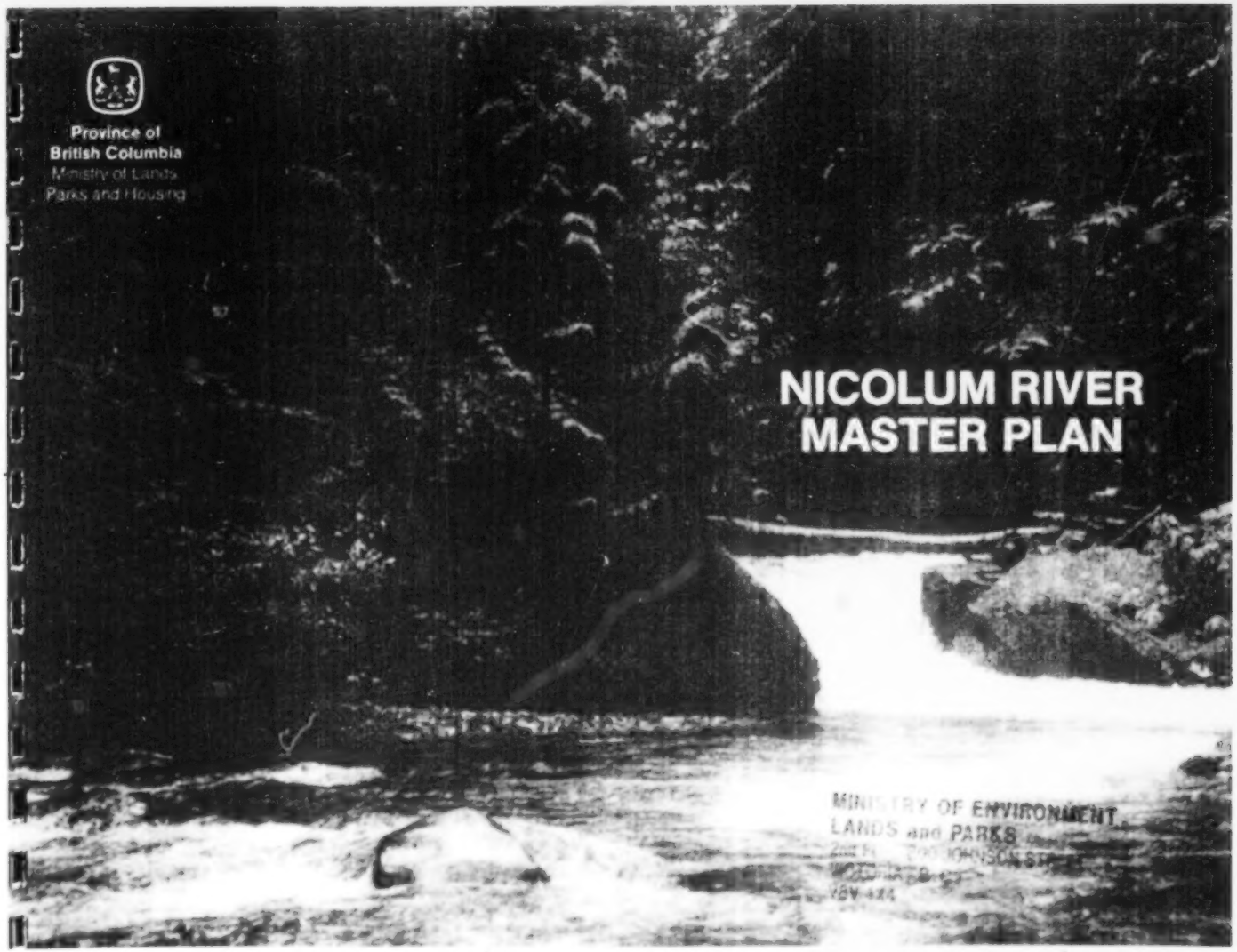
Province of
British Columbia
Ministry of Lands
Parks and Housing
NICOLUM RIVER
MASTER PLAN
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
LANDS and PARKS

Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing
Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division
Lower Mainland Region

105-03376/

NICOLUM RIVER PARK

MASTER PLAN

July, 1983

Province of British Columbia — Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing — PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

MEMORANDUM

LOWER MAINLAND REGION

To Mr. George Trachuk
Director, Planning & Research
Parks & Outdoor Recreation Div.
Ministry of Lands, Parks & Housing
Victoria, B.C.

Date 83.09.06
File 2-7-5-5

This Master Plan for Nicolum River Provincial Park

is herewith submitted for consideration and approval.

Approved: _____
Regional Director (Acting)

Approved: Memo to G. Trachuk Sept 12/83
Director, Planning and Research

Approved: _____
Executive Director

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PART I: SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

A. Plan Summary

Nicolum River Park is a small, 24 hectare park near Hope providing camping, picnicking and fishing opportunities to the travelling public on Highway #3. Dense forest cover and a small, fast flowing river have combined with the convenient location to make the park one of the most intensely used in the Region. Although this heavy use may suggest expansion of the existing opportunities, no future development is proposed. Future long range highway improvements proposed by the Ministry of Transportation and Highways may result in the elimination of vehicle access to Nicolum River Park. Until this occurs, management will focus on maintaining the existing condition of the natural resources and the quality and quantity of recreational opportunities.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

B. Regional and Provincial Context

Nicolum River Park is a Class 'A', Category 6 Provincial Park located immediately adjacent to Highway #3, eight kilometres east of Hope. Covering only 24 hectares of coastal forest/river environment on the valley bottom of the Nicolum River Valley, the park contains very little resource diversity. It was established in 1956 to provide a convenient rest stop for the public touring between the Lower Mainland and Interior Regions of the Province. The general objectives are to provide camping, fishing and day use opportunities. There are several other provincial parks in the area providing similar opportunities, namely E. C. Manning, Emory Creek, Kawkawa Lake and Bridal Veil Falls (Figure 1).

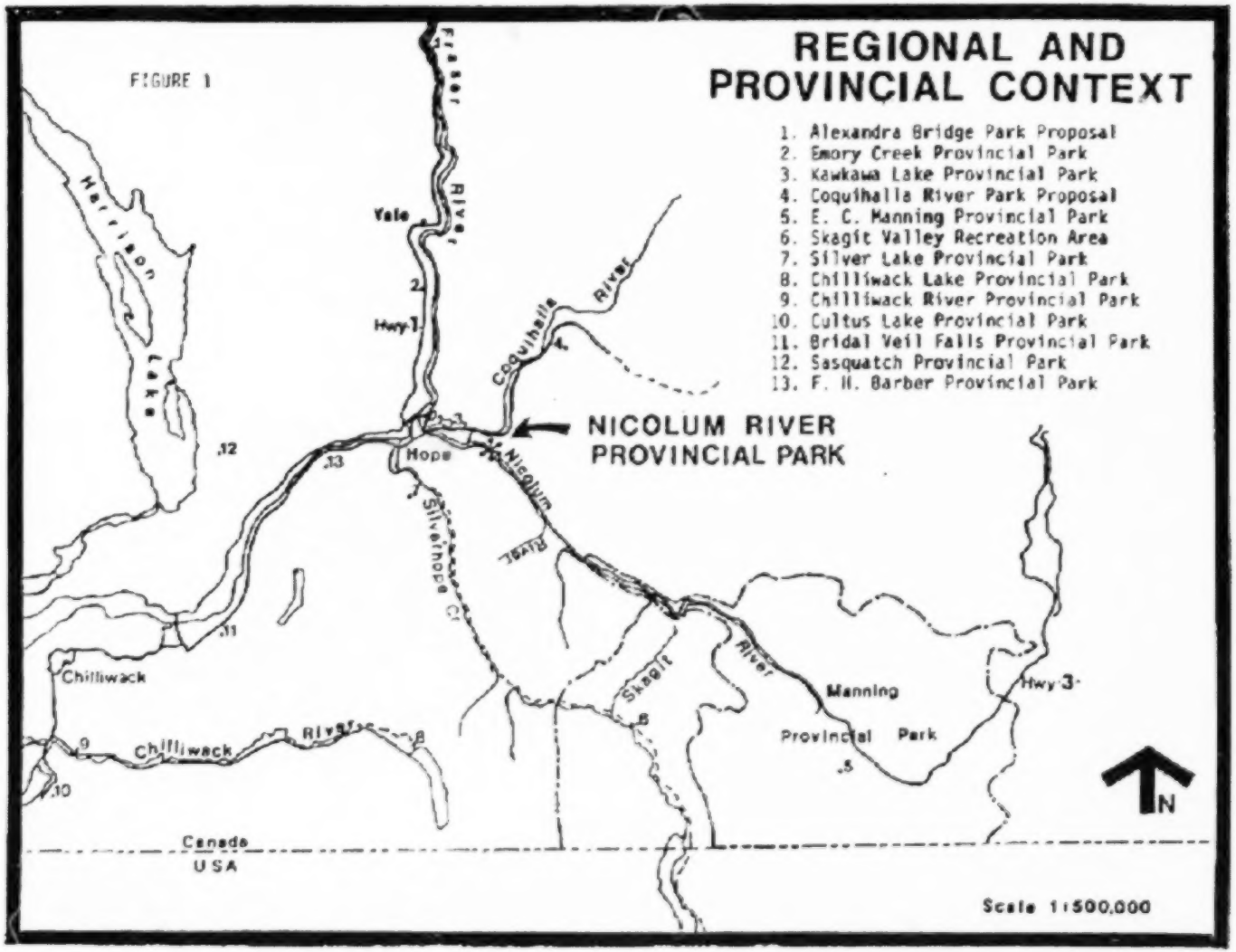


FIGURE 1
REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL CONTEXT
1. Alexandra Bridge Park Proposal
2. Emory Creek Provincial Park
3. Kawkawa Lake Provincial Park
4. Coquihalla River Park Proposal
5. E. C. Manning Provincial Park
6. Skagit Valley Recreation Area
7. Silver Lake Provincial Park
8. Chilliwack Lake Provincial Park
9. Chilliwack River Provincial Park
10. Cultus Lake Provincial Park
11. Bridal Veil Falls Provincial Park
12. Sasquatch Provincial Park
13. F. H. Barber Provincial Park
NICOLUM RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK
Fraser River
Vale
Hwy 1
Coquihalla River
Harrison Lake
Hope
Nicolum River
Silverhope Cr
Chilliwack
Chilliwack River
Skagit River
Manning Provincial Park
Hwy 3
Canada
USA
N
Scale 1:500,000

C. Resources

1. Natural Resources

a) Natural Regions/Regional Landscapes

Nicolum River Park lies within the Coastal Mountain Natural Region. It represents a small portion of the Lower Mainland-Skagit Mountain Regional Landscape. This landscape is characterized by major low elevation valleys (e.g. Skagit and Nicolum River), heavily forested mountains, wet climate and a variety of pointed, serrated and rounded peaks (e.g. Silvertip, Klesilkwa and Vedder Mountains).

b) Climate

The climate in the park, as recorded from a weather station at Kawkawa Lake in 1976, is similar to the coastal environment Maritime Zone. Summer is relatively warm and dry, while winter is usually cold and wet. The actual annual total precipitation in 1976 was 128.3 centimetres, with winter snowfall measuring 161.3 centimetres. Only 33 centimetres of total precipitation fell during May to September. Temperatures during this period range from 12 degrees Centigrade to 16 degrees Centigrade.

c) Physiography

With the small area that the park covers, physiography is of limited significance. The site occupies a low terrace of the Nicolum River. Topography is generally flat, with 20 hectares under 10% slope and only 5 hectares between 11-15% slope. The soils are a podzolic type, varying in depth from 30-60 centimetres and moderately well drained. Vegetation covers most of the site, with 60% coniferous cover and 40% deciduous.

d) Hydrology

There is very little hydrological information for the river, however from field assessment, the water surface appears to vary from 6 metres to 12 metres wide, with water levels fluctuating seasonally a maximum of 1.5 metres on the average. Water colour is clear, with extensive riffling by the park. The river banks range from 1.5 metres to 3 metres in height and are fairly stable except on some bends where erosion is taking place.

e) Vegetation

The park is situated in the Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone (Krajina, 1970). The characteristic species associated with this zone and presently on the site include Coastal Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*), and in well drained areas, Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). Other existing species include Broadleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) and Alder (*Alnus*) species. The average diameter of the tree cover is approximately 25 centimetres, with an average height of 12 metres. There are a few exceptionally large trees over 25 metres in height and diameters of 60 centimetres. The understory is sparse and consists mainly of Sword Fern (*Polystichum munitum*), bracken (*Pteridium aguilinum pubescens*), Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*) and moss (*Musci*) species.

f) Wildlife

The significant wildlife species at Nicolum River Park are primarily song birds and fish. Songbird species include varied thrush, black-throated grey warbler, red-breasted nuthatch, dippers and many more.

Fish species encountered during 1982 in research by the Ministry of Environment indicate significant rainbow trout populations and a few Dolly Varden. A bedrock barrier 6 metres high near the Nicolum/Coquihalla confluence prohibits anadromous species from using this section of the river.

The small area and low resource diversity of the park are not conducive to a major wildlife presence, however species associated ephemerally with the park include porcupine, coyote, Columbia blacktail deer and black bears.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

2. Cultural Resources

a) Archaeological

No archaeological sites have been found in Nicolum River Park.

b) Historical

The historical significance of Nicolum River Park is related to the city of Hope, formerly Fort Hope. Fort Hope was founded in 1849 by the Hudson's Bay Company when explorations showed it offered the best trade route to the interior. Alexander Caulfield Anderson of the Hudson's Bay Company was the first recorded explorer of the mountains to the east of Hope. In 1846, he explored the valley occupied by the Nicolum and Sumallo Rivers in search of a route to the Cariboo (the Dewdney Trail) and in the process, he made camp in the vicinity of Nicolum River Park. The section of Highway #3 at Nicolum River Park was once part of the historic trail.

3. Visual Resources

The visual resources of the park can be divided into three types of visual landscape experiences or orientations: canopied landscape, enclosed landscape and detailed landscape.

Canopied landscape refers to the visual experience created by the overhead plane of the forest canopy. The texture and colour of the coniferous forest defines a year round ceiling and creates a feeling of identity with the natural character of the forest.

Enclosed landscape orientation (cover photo) occurs along the Nicolum River itself. The line of the river edge, combined with the texture, form and colour contrasts of vegetation, rock and water, define the vertical and horizontal surface planes of a wall-to-forest composition. These pattern elements create the enclosure feeling and focus the observer's attention on the detailed feature of rippling water.

Detailed landscape orientation occurs within the two aforementioned experiences. The detail of form, line, texture and colour of all the small scale landscape elements - rocks, leaves, ferns, water, gravel, soil, tree bark - become the focus of attention and create a more intimate and passive involvement for the observer.

4. Analysis

a) Resource Analysis

There are very few significant resource problems or opportunities at Nicolum River Park. The only major problem is the fact that the park is segmented into three areas by the highway and the river. This limits any increase in opportunities at this site. Linking these areas or utilizing them separately is not feasible in view of the existing environmental constraints and the possible ramifications of the proposed highway realignment.

The park resources are in good condition and require very little resource management. In the river, however, a major logjam is visually obtrusive and requires some clean-up.

b) Conservation/Recreation Significance

The park is highly significant recreationally in that it serves the Division's objective of providing transient day use and camping recreational opportunities. With the heavy use this park receives, this objective is successfully served. The significance for conservation, on the other hand, is minor. Natural features are limited in quantity and quality. Although the park features are common throughout the valley, the river is most easily accessible from this location. Regional landscape representation of the Lower Mainland - Skagit Valley Landscape is inconsequential and is served in other parks, namely the Skagit Valley Recreation Area and Manning Park.

D. Land Tenures, Occupancy Rights and Jurisdictions

1. Leases and Use Permits: None.

2. Fee Simple Lands: None.

3. Other Tenures:

a) Highway right-of-way for Highway 3

4. Trespasses: None.

5. Mineral Claims: None.

6. Statutory Jurisdictions:

The Coquihalla River and its tributaries (Nicolum River) are subject to special fishing regulations. There is an angling closure from May 1 to September 30, and a single barbless hook and wild steelhead release regulation from August 1 to September 30. With the region wide regulations of single barbless hook and wild steelhead release from December 1 to April 30, this leaves October and November being the only open fishing months for Nicolum River (Ministry of Environment).

7. Major Additions: None.

E. Existing Facilities

Existing park facilities (Figure 2) consist of the following:

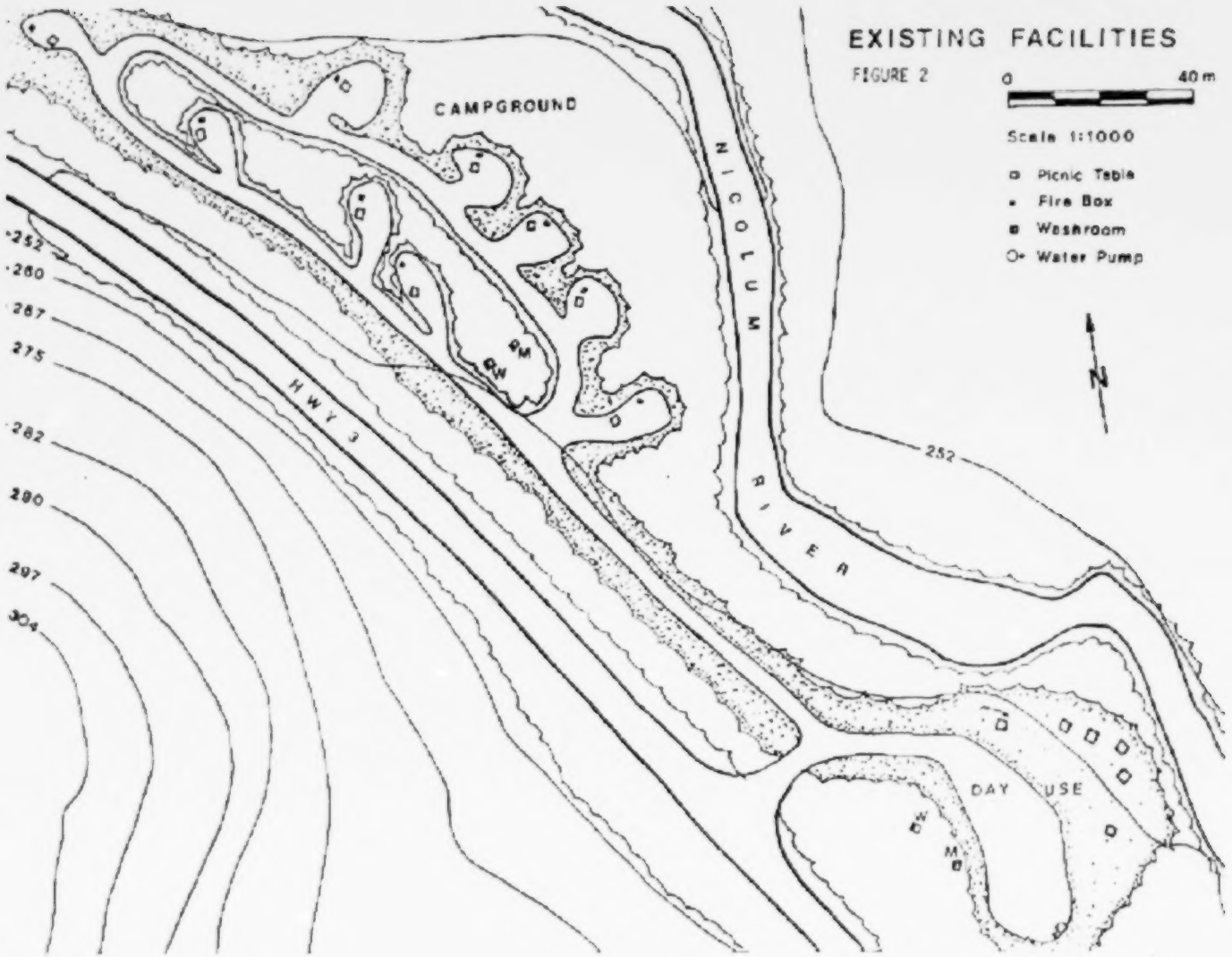
1. Nine easy access campsites with picnic tables and fire pits.
2. Gravel day use parking lot capable of accommodating approximately 10 vehicles.
3. Six day use picnic tables overlooking the Nicolum River, close to the parking area.
4. Four pit toilets, four garbage cans and a park information/registry shelter.
5. Hand water pump in day use area.

F. Market Analysis

1. Existing Use

The visitors to Nicolum River Provincial Park are essentially highway travellers heading to other destinations who stop for accommodation or as a rest stop. By far the majority of them, over 82%, are residents from the Interior and Lower Mainland Regions of the province. From attendance figures (appended), it appears that the park is extremely popular with the travelling public. During 1981, there were over 1100 party nights and over 1350 party days recorded at Nicolum. These figures represent an 80% attendance rate for day use and an 86% rate for camping over the entire May to September season. The most intensively used period was the month of August, when the park was full every day.

The market area that the park serves covers Highways #1 and #3 from Boston Bar to Princeton and as far west as Bridal Veil Falls, with Hope in the middle of the market area. The competitive market is in the field of campsite accommodation. There are a number of private campgrounds that compete in this market and, to some extent, the large number of hotels and motels in Hope and along the highway are also in the competitive market. For the purpose of this study, however, indoor accommodation will be considered outside the realm of the campground marketplace.


EXISTING FACILITIES
FIGURE 2
0
40 m
Scale 1:1000
Picnic Table
Fire Box
Washroom
Water Pump
N
CAMPGROUND
NICOLUM RIVER
HWY 3
DAY USE
252
260
267
275
282
290
297
304

2. Supply

The following chart identifies the suppliers and supply of park and outdoor recreation related services in the area (Table 1).

TABLE 1

SUPPLIERS

Provincial Parks:	Camping	# of Sites	Fishing	Swimming	Picnicking	Hiking	Winter Rec.	Viewing	Group Use	Boating	Day Use Parking
Bridal Veil Falls					•	•		•			60
E. C. Manning	•	473	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1375
Emory Creek	•	34	•		•						10
Kawkawa Lake			•	•	•					•	105
Nicolum River	•	9	•		•						10
Municipal Parks:											
Memorial Park					•				•		
Private Campgrounds:*											
Bridal Falls Camperland	•	150									
Camper's Roost Park	•	52		•							
Canyon Alpine Motel	•	20									
Coquihalla Campsite	•	135		•							
Cariboo Trail Campground	•	36		•							
Flood Falls Campsite	•	33	•			•					
Holiday Motel Trailer Park	•	15		•							
Hope K.O.A.	•	150		•							
Hunterville Campsite	•	30									
Poole's Evergreen Resort	•	100	•	•							
Snowhite Campsite	•	40	•			•					
Wild Rose Campground	•	45									
Proposed Jones Creek Resort	•	300	•	•	•	•		•	•		

*Some of these areas' supplies are not on the suppliers' property but are within the vicinity.

3. Demand

There is very little information available to assess specific demand for park and outdoor recreational services. Some evidence, however, of general demand can be hypothesized based on inference from three main sources: park use attendance, private campground numbers and highway traffic volumes.

Park use attendance figures provide a measure of demand based on consumption of service. From the attendance figures for parks in the market area (appended), there is a clear indication that all facilities are being used extensively.

During the months of July and August, all provincial park camping and day use facilities, with the exception of Kawkawa Lake, were used to near and in some cases, greater maximum capacity levels. Nicolum recorded 100% occupancy for both camping and day use facilities. Although overall attendance has declined, it is still apparent that the demand for camping and day use opportunities as expressed by existing consumption is very high.

The presence of a large number of private campgrounds in the area suggests that a viable competitive market exists or once existed. Recent major facility construction and proposals seem to imply the former. In the last two years, the campsite supply of the private sector has increased by 150 additional campsites, accounting for a 13% increase. A further 300 campsites are being proposed for construction within the next five years. From this information, one can conjecture that this indicates significant general demand as a function of the perceived need by the private sector.

Finally, as Nicolum River Park is strictly orientated to highway users, the intensity of highway use has a direct relationship to park use and demand. Unfortunately, traffic disruption as a consequence of construction on both Highways #1 and #3 over the past few years has prevented drawing any conclusion for demand. According to the Ministry of Transportation and Highways, however, traffic volumes throughout the province are projected to increase annually by 5-6% and that this is the minimum amount of increase in traffic on Highway #3 that is expected. In actuality, Highway #3 is expected to exceed the 5-6% level as a result of the completion of highway improvements. Translated into terms of demand for park opportunities, this would suggest a minimum demand of 55 more party nights and 70 more party days at Nicolum River Park annually.

4. Conclusions

Camping and day use opportunities are major viable services of high demand in the market. Nicolum River Park, being highway oriented and not able to expand its facilities, will become increasingly used with greater intensity. This abundance of visitors implies no additional marketing action is required.

G. Planning Issues

1. Expansion of Highway #3, possibly within the next 5-10 years, could result in loss of access to the park

The preliminary plans of the Ministry of Transportation and Highways indicate a need to upgrade and realign the existing highway to improve safety and increase capacity. Unfortunately, this may require infringing on the park boundaries in such a way that vehicle access would no longer be possible. In this event, the park would be closed and its role taken over by a future proposed campground at Manning Park's west gate, Sumallo Grove, or the newly proposed Coquihalla River Park.

2. Should the log jam be removed?

The log jam in the Nicolum River, although visually obtrusive, may play a significant role to fish habitat. Its removal, therefore, while considerably improving the visual quality of the river, may be harmful to other resources. Consultation with the Ministry of Environment is required to adequately assess the ramifications.

3. No Development Expansion

As was previously mentioned, the existing site conditions preclude the expansion of the park's carrying capacity to meet projected future demand. With no other areas available between Manning Park and Hope that are appropriate for new park development, there is little that can be done. It is anticipated that future use at Nicolum River Park in excess of existing capacities will be directed to Manning Park and the private campgrounds in Hope.

PART II: THE PLAN

A. Specific Objectives

The general purpose of the park is to provide camping and day use opportunities along Highway #3 to the travelling public through the following objectives:

* To provide 1500 camping opportunities annually.

* To provide 1500 day use opportunities annually.

* To provide access to the Nicolum River for fishing and viewing and conserve the park environment.

B. Zoning

Nicolum River Provincial Park is divided into two management areas: development zone and natural area zone.

1. Development Zone

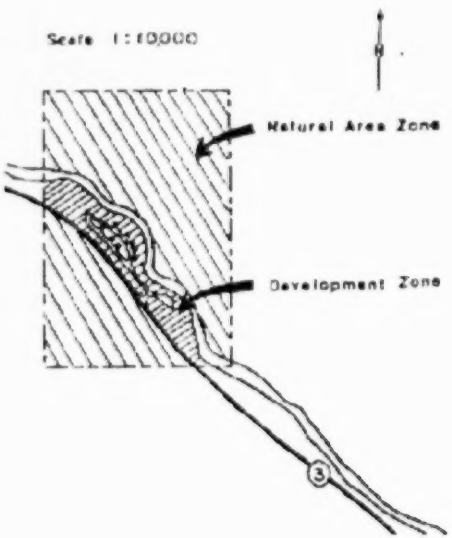
The purpose of the development zone is to provide a variety of facility oriented recreational opportunities. All the camping and day use areas of the park are therefore included in this zone. The park objectives to provide 1500 camping and day use opportunities are also addressed in this zone.

2. Natural Area Zone

The purpose of the natural area zone is to ensure that management actions will maintain or restore if required the natural environment setting of the park. This covers the remaining portions of the park and addresses the park objectives of conserving the environment.

C. Development

The park is essential fully developed, consequently facility expansion is not proposed.



D. Management Policies

The small area of the park, coupled with the limited diversity of resources and good design layout, have made Nicolum River Park a relatively simple park to administer. There are very few actions required to manage the natural resources and public uses of the park.

1. Resources

a) Land

The land will be managed for intense levels of recreational use. All gravel paths and surfaces will be graded and improved as required and the existing balance of natural and developed areas will be retained.

b) Water

The Ministry of Environment will be encouraged to examine the river log jam and take appropriate action if feasible.

c) Vegetation

Trees will be monitored on a continual basis for any hazards that may affect public safety with corrective action taken if required. Alder and other species will be periodically cut back in problem areas, especially at the park entrance.

d) Wildlife

Existing wildlife species and habitat will be retained at present levels as much as possible.

e) Cultural

The historic significance of the Nicolum Valley as it relates to A. C. Anderson's search for a trail access to the Cariboo will be explained on the existing information shelter.

f) Visual

The visual quality of the park will be maintained in its existing condition and given full consideration in the eventuality of resource modifying actions.

2. Public Uses

a) Recreation

The acceptable types of recreational activity for this park include picnicking, camping and fishing.

b) Visitor Services

The existing visitor services material provided on the information shelter will be continued and updated periodically.

E. Marketing and Information Program

Marketing of Nicolum River Park at present is through the standard provincial parks map, park brochures and staff referral. Further promotion of this park, other than for the early and late summer, may encourage levels of use too intense for the park's carrying capacity. As such, no further marketing action is recommended.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Camping Attendance (in Parties)

1981	May	June	July	August	September	Average Occupancy/ Season*
E. C. Manning**	1,521	3,676	8,963	9,955	3,907	51%
Emery Creek	582	777	978	1,116	871	82%
Nicolum River	146	202	281	287	194	79%
				Annual Total Attendance:		33,456
1980						
E. C. Manning	5,084	4,318	9,107	9,938	2,333	56%
Emery Creek	741	933	1,127	1,164	804	90%
Nicolum River	164	210	275	276	184	79%
				Annual Total Attendance:		36,658

Day Use Attendance (in Parties)

1981	May	June	July	August	September	Average Occupancy/ Season*
E. C. Manning	18,570	20,192	45,748	56,323	24,660	77.6%
Kawkawa Lake	376	514	882	2,523	619	30%
Nicolum River	169	238	231	489	246	89%
Bridal Veil Falls	3,142	3, 877	7,550	8,306	3,505	283%
				Annual Total Attendance:		198,118
1980						
E. C. Manning	21,678	41,756	46,580	19,988	16,177	69%
Kawkawa Lake	441	450	792	690	234	16%
Nicolum River	279	413	420	432	288	118%
Bridal Veil Falls	3,187	4,302	7,993	7,074	3,668	282%

Annual Total Attendance: 240,275

* Average occupancy per season was calculated as a percentage of visitor attendance to the facilities' carrying capacity.

** Primitive tent camping was excluded from the capacity calculations as it did not relate to the type of camping occurring at Nicolum River Park.

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